(I) notice that failure to attend an interview may result in delay or denial of benefits; and

(J) notice that the household is responsible for rescheduling a missed interview and for providing required verification information.

(iii) To expedite the recertification process, State agencies are encouraged to send a recertification form, an interview appointment letter, and a statement of needed verification required by § 273.2(c)(5) with the NOE.

(2) Recertification form.

(i) The State agency shall provide each household with a recertification form to obtain all information needed to determine eligibility and benefits for a new certification period. This form can only be used by households which are applying for recertification before the end of their current certification period. Recertification forms must be approved by FCS as required by §273.2(b)(3). The recertification form must elicit from the household sufficient information regarding household composition, income and resources that, when added to information already contained in the casefile, will ensure an accurate determination of eligibility and benefits. The information required by §273.2(b)(1) (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) must be included on the recertification form. The information regarding the Income and Eligibility Verification System in §273.2(b)(2) may be provided on a separate form. A combined form for PA and GA households may be used in accordance with §273.2(j). Monthly reporting households shall be recertified as provided in §273.21(q). State agencies may use the same form for households required to report changes in circumstances and monthly reporting households.

(ii) The State agency may request that the household bring the recertification form to the interview or return the form by a specified date (not less than 15 days after receipt of the form).

(3) Interview. (i) As part of the recertification process, the State agency shall conduct a face-to-face interview with a member of each household. The face-to-face interview may be waived in accordance with §273.2(e). The State agency may also waive the face-to-face interview for a household that has no earned income if all of its members are elderly or disabled. The State agency has the option of conducting a telephone interview or a home visit for those households for whom the office interview is waived. However, a household that requests a face-to-face interview must be granted one.

(ii) If a household receives PA/GA and will be recertified more than once

in a 12-month period, the State agency may choose to conduct a face-to-face interview with that household only once during that period. The face-to-face interview shall be conducted at the same time that the household receives a face-to-face interview for PA/GA purposes. At any other recertification during that year period, the State agency may interview the household by telephone or conduct a home visit. However, a household that requests a face-to-face interview must be granted one.

(iii) If a household does not appear for an interview scheduled before it has submitted a recertification form, the State agency must reschedule the interview. State agencies shall schedule interviews so that the household has at least 10 days after the interview in which to provide verification before the certification period expires.

(4) Verification. Information provided by the household shall be verified in accordance with § 273.2(f)(8)(i). The State agency shall provide the household a notice of required verification as provided in 273.2(c)(5) and notify the household of the date by which the verification requirements must be satisfied. The household must be allowed a minimum of 10 days to provide required verification information.

(c) *Timely application for recertification.* 

(1) Households reporting required changes in circumstances that are certified for one month or certified in the second month of a two-month certification period shall have 15 days from the date the NOE is received to file a timely application for recertification.

(2) Other households reporting required changes in circumstances that submit applications by the 15th day of the last month of the certification period shall be considered to have made a timely application for recertification.

(3) For monthly reporting households, the filing deadline shall be either the 15th of the last month of the certification period or the normal date for filing a monthly report, at the State agency's option. The option chosen must be uniformly applied to the State agency's entire monthly reporting caseload.

(4) For households consisting of applicants or recipients of SSI who apply for food stamp recertification at offices of the SSA in accordance with  $\S 273.2(k)(1)$ , an application shall be considered filed for normal processing purposes when the signed application is received by the SSA.

(d) Timely processing.

(1) Households that were certified for one month or certified for two months who are in the second month of the certification period and have met all required application procedures shall be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility. Eligible households shall be provided an opportunity to receive benefits no later than 30 calendar days after the date the household received its last allotment.

(2) Other households that have met all application requirements shall be notified of their eligibility or ineligibility by the end of their current certification period. In addition, the State agency shall provide households that are determined eligible an opportunity to participate by the household's normal issuance cycle in the month following the end of its current certification period.

(e) Delayed processing.

(1) Delays caused by the State agency. Households which have submitted an application for recertification in a timely manner but, due to State agency error, are not determined eligible in sufficient time to provide for issuance of benefits by the household's next normal issuance date shall receive an immediate opportunity to participate upon being determined eligible, and the allotment shall not be prorated. If the household was unable to participate for the month following the expiration of the certification period because of State agency error, the household is entitled to restored benefits.

(2) *Delays caused by the household.* (i) If a household does not submit a new application by the end of the certification period, the State agency must close the case without further action.

(ii) If a recertification form is submitted more than one month after the filing deadline, it shall be treated the same as an application for initial certification. In accordance with  $\S 273.10(a)(1)(ii)$ , the household's benefits shall not be prorated unless there has been a break of more than one month in the household's certification.

(iii) A household which submits an application by the filing deadline but does not appear for an interview scheduled after the application has been filed, or does not submit verification within the required timeframe, loses its right to uninterrupted benefits. The State agency has three options for handling such cases:

(A) Send the household a denial notice as soon as the household fails to appear for an interview or submit required verification information. If the interview is completed, or the household provides the required